

Light reading

City Light offers some of the lowest rates in the U.S. and the Northwest. Jan/Feb 2010

From the superintendent



Last November, the Seattle City Council voted to increase City Light rates by 13.8 percent, a change that went into effect on Jan. 1, 2010. For the average residential customer, the increase adds about \$6 per month to your bill.

It was a difficult decision but the Council took this action for sound reasons, including maintaining our current level of service and addressing City Light's financial shortfall that resulted from dramatically reduced surplus power revenues. It also protects the utility's bond ratings — a smart move in the long term that will save City Light as much as \$90 million in borrowing costs during the next 10 years.

The rate adjustment also allows City Light to continue conservation programs that give customers choices about their energy consumption. In this issue of Light Reading, we offer a few ways to find savings through conservation.

Raising rates is never easy, and it's harder in an economic downturn. I understand it has an impact on customers. I want you to know that I take seriously our pledge to deliver affordable, environmentally responsible, reliable power to you. It's because of that commitment we believe improvements to our aging system cannot be deferred any longer without affecting the service you deserve and expect. Even with this change, Seattle will continue to enjoy the lowest rates of comparably sized cities across

the country, and among the lowest in the region.

- **Superintendent
Jorge Carrasco**



Conserve & save on your electric bills

Chill that bill

Get a \$30 rebate and free pick-up of your older, working, extra refrigerator or freezer. One less fridge could cut your electricity

bill by 10 percent or more, explains Bob Balzar, City Light's Conservation director. "Older refrigerators can use a lot more energy than those produced today. For example, an 18-cubic-foot refrigerator manufactured 20 years ago might consume 1000 kWh a year, and costs \$88 per year to run. An Energy Star® refrigerator made today can use 500 kWh and cost \$44 annually. Older units use even more, some as much as 2800 kWh per year or \$246." Bob adds that it's cheaper for City Light to pay for conservation. "For every kilowatt we save, we put off the need to build a new power plant. It's actually less expensive for us to pay \$30 and get that old second refrigerator off the grid. Ten refrigerators removed from the grid saves enough electricity to power one average Seattle home for a year." To take part in the program, see www.seattle.gov/refrigerator or call **206.233.COLD (2653)**.



Vampires may be trendy, but not this kind

They're called energy vampires. Those black-box plugs that charge cameras, cell phones, toys and tools suck power even when nothing is being charged. The average home wastes about \$57 a year this way, or 650 kWh — electricity you're paying for and getting nothing in return. Power strips can help. Plug chargers into power strips and then use the strips' switch to cut power when you're not charging. More at www.seattle.gov/light/conserv or call **206.684.3800**.



Save on CFLs, then recycle

Energy Star® compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) use one-quarter the energy and last 10 times longer than regular bulbs, so look for City Light **Twist & Save** signs in stores for deep discounts on all types of CFLs for your home. Because they contain small amounts of mercury, it's important to recycle them, which you can do at any Bartell Drug, Home Depot or McLendon's Hardware locations. Find out more at www.seattle.gov/twistandsave or call **206.684.3800**.

Light Reading online

Can't wait until your bill arrives to check out Light Reading? Get it online as soon as it's published (posted every two months): www.seattle.gov/light/publications/lightreading

Info and events

Hohm sweet hohm

Last fall, Seattle City Light became the first utility ever to offer customers the ability to link their electricity consumption data with Microsoft Hohm, an online application that tracks energy use and provides personalized energy conservation recommendations. Hohm analyzes users' energy data, household features, and appliances, then identifies specific ways to cut energy use. (The word Hohm is a combination of "home" and "ohm," the standard unit of measure for electrical resistance.) Learn more at www.seattle.gov/light or www.microsoft-hohm.com.

Update account info



If you've had a City Light account for years, we may not have current information.

Many of our customers now only use cell phones and that number may not be in our system. Enhance our service to you by updating your account: online at www.seattle.gov/light/accounts or call **206.684.3000**. Your information is not shared.

Tweet, please

More customers are following City Light's social networking site on Twitter (www.twitter.com/SeaCityLight), especially during outages. We're also sharing news on the utility's blog, Power Lines (<http://powerlines.seattle.gov>).

No lights, no heat?

Get your survival kit together to prepare for power outages and other emergencies. Find out how at www.takewinterbystorm.org.

Home-repair loans



Does your home have unsafe electrical wiring? Dangerous or inefficient appli-

cances? Inadequate weatherization? The Seattle Office of Housing's Home Repair Loan program provides no-interest loans to qualified low- and moderate-income Seattle homeowners for repairs. E-mail homewise@seattle.gov or call **206.684.0244**.

Easy, fast, secure ebilling



It's been a year since City Light launched its online bill-payment service. By December 2009, more than 20,000 customers had signed on to receive bills electronically. Go to www.seattle.gov/light, scroll down, then click on the electronic billing link. Questions? Call **206.684.3000**.

City Light's Life-Support Equipment Program

Customers dependent on electrically powered life-support equipment should contact City Light because we have a program just for them. The program allows us to know where these customers are; helps them prepare for outages; and offers information on how to contact the utility about an outage. Download a registration form (sign-up requires a doctor's certification) at www.seattle.gov/light/Accounts/LifeSupport or call **206.684.3020**.

Giving trumps recession

City employees raised more than \$1.1 million for charities and drew pledges for 17,500 volunteer hours as part of the City's annual 2009 Combined Charities campaign. The fundraising exceeded goals in spite of the recession. City Light employees gave nearly \$173,000, the most ever by a single city department. Other leaders were Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle Department of Transportation and the Seattle Police Department. The campaign benefits more than 1,300 charities, including health and human service organizations, education and literacy programs, and environmental nonprofits.

Green Schools

Washington Green Schools is a free statewide K-12 Web-based program in which schools receive certification and recognition for action in energy efficiency, recycling, and more. Developed by utility and educational experts, funded by the Wash. State Dept. of Ecology, the program has more than 60 schools signed up — 10 in Seattle. More at www.wagreenschools.org.



In your neighborhood: City Light @ work

City Light is in the following neighborhoods during January and February to make sure you have reliable service:

- Queen Anne Hill, from about 6th Ave. W. and W. Galer, north to W. Blaine, down to 10th Ave. W.;
- 1st Ave. S. to Occidental Ave. S., from Railroad Way to King St.;
- View Ridge, Arroyo Beach, and Laurelhurst;
- Capitol Hill.

Details on construction projects at: www.seattle.gov/light/const_mgmt

- Streetlights: Phase two (of four) of our re-lamping project was completed ahead of schedule in 2009, including our entire service area south of Denny Way. Phase three runs from Denny Way north to N. 65th. The final phase, from N. 65th to our northern suburbs, begins in 2011.



Seattle City Light

The first carbon-neutral utility in the nation.

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Seattle, WA 98124-4023

www.seattle.gov/light

Questions, comments or suggestions?

E-mail respond.scl@seattle.gov or call **206.684.3000**.

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This newsletter is available in alternate formats upon request. Versions in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Somali, Tagalog and Korean available online or call **206.684.3000**.

Warm Hearts, Warm Homes



Bruce Harrell, chair,
Energy & Technology Committee,
Seattle City Council

Jorge Carrasco, superintendent,
Seattle City Light

Thank you!

We want to take this opportunity to thank the many City Light customers who have contributed to Project Share, a program that provides help with electric utility bills in a time of financial crisis. For more than 25 years, our customers have been reaching into their hearts and pockets to help those in our community who are less fortunate. These tough economic times make Project Share more important than ever.

Below you can sign up to contribute to Project Share. It's easy to do and all of your contributions are tax deductible. Whether it's a one-time donation, or a regular part of your utility bill, every dollar and "rounded up" cent helps.

Since 1985, \$7,067,594 has been distributed, more than 29,700 people have been helped, with the average amount of assistance being \$318. Because Project Share funds come primarily from our customers, you're an important reason why this program is successful.



Project Share Donation Warm Hearts, Warm Homes

- ☐ I am a new Project Share contributor.
 - ☐ I already contribute to Project Share but would like to increase my donation by this amount: \$ _____.
 - ☐ Enclosed is a one-time donation payable to Project Share in the amount of \$ _____.
 - ☐ I authorize Seattle City Light to add \$ _____ to each of my electric bills, for at least one year.*
- OR**
- ☐ I authorize City Light to round up my bills to the next highest dollar amount for at least one year.*
(Eg: If your bill is \$75.36, the amount due is \$76.00.)

I understand that these voluntary contributions will be placed in a separate Project Share account. These funds will be used to assist income-eligible customers pay their electricity bills during emergencies to avoid disconnection.

Name	Day Phone Number (include area code)		
Service Address	City	State	Zip Code
1 - -			
City Light Account Number	Signature	Date	

Mail coupon to: City of Seattle, Treasury Services, PO Box 34017, Seattle, WA 98124-1017

*Note: Please renew your pledge if you move or change your utility account address. Call (206) 684-3000 if you wish to change your donation status after one year.